

AGRICULTURE AND FARMING

Types of farming

Agriculture is the process of farming of crops and livestock (animals). There are different types of farming. **Pastoral** farming is the rearing (growing) of livestock only such as sheep, goats, cows, pigs and horses. A **dairy** farm is an example of pastoral farming where cows are reared to produce milk. **Arable** farming is growing of crops such as wheat, barley, potatoes and sugarcane. Many farms grow both crops and livestock and these are called **mixed** farms. **Plantation** farming is growing of tree crops such as tea, coffee, bananas and oil palms. These are usually very large farms and are most common in tropical countries. Most farms are **sedentary** which means they are fixed in one place. **Nomadic** farmers move around from place to place with herds of livestock such as goats, camels or cattle, to find fresh water and grass.



Aims of farming

Most farms aim to produce food. **Commercial** farms grow crops or livestock to sell at markets. This makes a profit for the farmer and provides food for the population. Some commercial farmers produce 'non-food' crops which are used by industries, like oil palms for the soap industry. A **subsistence** farm produces crops or livestock just to feed the families that work on it. Very little, or none, of the produce is sent to market. This is very simple farming.

The scale of farming

An **extensive** farming system uses large areas of land. This is possible in areas where there is low population density. Cereal farming on the prairies in Canada is an example of extensive, commercial, arable farming. Pastoral farms are usually extensive as the animals need large areas of land to feed. Very large, extensive farms of sheep or cattle are called **ranches**, and can be found in countries such as Australia and Brazil. An **intensive** farming system involves very small areas of land. This is more common where there is a high population density and **fertile** soil. If soil is fertile, it can produce a lot of crops from a small area. Extensive and intensive farming can be commercial or subsistence, producing large or small amounts of produce.

Farming systems

A system is made up of: inputs, processes, stores and outputs. The **inputs** go into a farm to make things happen. Physical inputs include sunshine, water, soil and air. Human inputs consist of labour, money, tools or machinery, fertilisers and pesticides. **Stores** on farms are where things are kept. These include sheds for machinery, barns for livestock, silos for grain, a farmhouse and farm shops. **Processes** are the actions which are carried out by the farmer such as feeding livestock or harvesting wheat. The **outputs** of a farming system are the produce that is grown. The outputs of an arable farm are crops, for example, wheat. The outputs of a pastoral farm are livestock items such as meat, milk or wool, and any waste such as manure.